マンガ マニア

MANGA mania PRESENTS

# SKYBLAZER™

THE NEW MANGA HERO FROM SONY!

SKYBLAZER BATTLES THE DREAD ASHURA

FLASHBACK! GROUND ZERO TEXAS!

PLUS WIN!!

- Original SKYBLAZER art
- EQUINOX on SNES

SKYBLAZER © 1992 Sony Electronic Publishing Company. © 1993 Sony Electronic Publishing Co

SKYBLAZER

COLLECTOR'S EDITION ● ISSUE 1

SONY IMAGESOFT

MANGA

# FLASHBACK

## AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

FLASHBACK™ is the state-of-the-art arcade adventure on the SNES, with stunning Rotoscoped animation, absorbing puzzles, and super-cool action. Combining elements from sci-fi classics such as Total Recall, The Running Man and Blade Runner, this award-winning best-seller takes you on an epic journey across three worlds. Armies of deadly enemies, over 20 objects to find and use, digitised sounds, superbly fluid cartoon-quality animation, and cinematic plot updates all make it an intense audio and visual bombardment. FLASHBACK™ - an unforgettable experience.

**NMS - 94% - *IT'S HIGHLY ORIGINAL... IT'S ONE OF THE BEST VIDEO GAMES YOU'LL EVER PLAY.***

**SUPER ACTION - 92% - *A GRAPHICAL MASTERPIECE, STUNNING ANIMATION AND AN ATTENTION TO DETAIL YOU'LL FIND EXTREMELY IMPRESSIVE ALL COMBINED TO MAKE THIS AN ABSOLUTE SCORCHER.***

**SNES FORCE - 91% - *TO PUT IT BLUNTLY, BUY FLASHBACK AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY, IT IS DEFINITELY ONE OF THE BEST PIECES OF SOFTWARE RELEASED THIS YEAR.***

SONY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

U.S. GOLD

Delphine Software International

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

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AT LAST! I'VE TRACKED THE CULT OF ASHURA TO THEIR LAIR.
AND IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN ...
...THIS IS WHERE THEY'VE TAKEN ARIANNA!
KABOOM
KRAK
WHOF
HIII-YA!
HUNFF!
THIS LOOKS LIKE IT LEADS TO THE INNER SANCTUM.
STORY : DICK HANSOM
PENCILS : SIMON FRASER
INKS : GARRY MARSHALL
LETTERS : ELLIE DE VILLE

ARIANNA!
SKYBLAZER! YOU MUST TURN BACK! MY SORCERY COULD NOT VANQUISH HIM!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? VANQUISH WHO?
DO YOU THINK THE LORD OF WAR WOULD TRUST HIS LACKEYS TO DEFEAT SUCH A POWERFUL YOUNG SORCERESS?
NO! ARIANNA HAS FALLEN PREY TO THE MIGHT OF ASHURA HIMSELF.

AND SUCH PUNY POWERS AS YOURS PRESENT NO MORE THAN THE SLIGHTEST HINDRANCE.
PREPARE TO DIE, SKY-WHELP!
WOOMPF
NOOO!
AARGH!
...AND NOW WE SHALL DEPART, MY PRETTY ONE...
SKYBLAZER, NO...
...TO THE TEMPLE INFERNUS, WHERE YOU CAN REIGN FOREVER AS MY QUEEN.

SO, THERE FINALLY SEEMS TO BE SOME STIRRINGS OF LIFE...

WHAT...? WHO...?
WHERE ARE YOU? THE SHRINE OF THE WANDERING SOUL.
AND WHO AM I? WELL, NEVER YOU MIND ABOUT THAT...
JUST BE THANKFUL I WAS AROUND TO PICK UP THE PIECES AFTER YOUR FOOLHARDY ATTEMPT TO BATTLE ASHURA.

DID I...?
OF COURSE NOT. HE KILLED YOU WITH EASE, AND ARIANNA IS NOW HIS ETERNAL SLAVE.

HOWEVER, I CAN TELL THAT THE BLOOD OF THE SKY LORD RUNS IN YOUR VEINS. AND EVEN AN INSOLENT PUP LIKE YOU HAS THE MAKINGS OF A GREAT HERO.

I HAVE GIVEN YOU A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE, AND INVESTED YOU WITH MIGHTY NEW POWERS.
USE THEM WISELY AND SPARINGLY...

...FOR YOU WILL HAVE SORE NEED OF THEM ON YOUR JOURNEY TO THE EASTERN PLAINS.
PING
WHERE DID THAT OLD MAN GO? AND WHAT ARE THESE MIGHTY NEW POWERS HE SPOKE OF?

WELL, I GUESS THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT. LET'S HOPE THIS IS THE PATH THAT LEADS TO THE EASTERN PLAINS.
GRAARRR!
CHOK
AARRR!
WUH!
WELL, IF THE PATH IS SO FRAUGHT WITH DANGER...
...IT MIGHT BE A WISER IDEA TO MAKE MY WAY THROUGH THE TREES.
BUT THEN AGAIN, IT MIGHT NOT!
SORRY TO LEAVE SO ABRUPTLY, BUT I'VE GOT THINGS TO DO...

AND THIS MUST BE THE TEMPLE INFERNUS. THAT'S WHERE I'M GOING TO FIND ASHURA ... AND ARIANNA!
STRANGE! IT'S NOT LIKE ASHURA TO LEAVE HIMSELF SO VULNERABLE TO ATTACK ...
SSSSSSS
LOOKS LIKE I SPOKE TOO SOON.
SO THESE MUST BE MY NEW POWERS ...
I MUST ADMIT, I'M IMPRESSED!
RRROOARRR!

BUT WILL THEY BE ENOUGH TO OVERCOME ASHURA?
IF I SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO CONFRONT HIM, THAT IS.
I SURE AM BLAZING A TRAIL WITH THESE NEW POWERS...
FWOOOSH!
ASHURA IS CLOSE! I CAN SENSE IT!
KERRASH!

YOU LITTLE FOOL! WAS ONE DEATH NOT ENOUGH FOR YOU?
ARIANNA IS FAR FROM HERE, AND I DO NOT INTEND TO LET YOU LIVE TO FIND HER.
HAI!
ARIANNA WILL NEVER BE YOURS, YOU FIEND...
...NOT WHILE THERE'S A BREATH LEFT IN MY BODY TO DEFEND HER!
YOU PATHETIC CUR! DID YOU THINK I WOULD RISK AN OPEN CONFRONTATION WITH YOU?
YOU HAVE BEEN WASTING YOUR ENERGIES FIGHTING A GHOST. AND YOU WILL NEVER TRACE ME TO MY LAIR ... NEVER ..
COME BACK AND FIGHT, YOU COWARD!
WHEREVER YOU HIDE, ASHURA, YOU CANNOT PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE POWER OF SKYBLAZER!!

**WIN THE ORIGINAL ARTWORK FOR THIS COMIC!**

# exclusive SKYBLAZER competition

**Here is a once only opportunity to win the original hand drawn artwork to the Skyblazer story appearing in this collector's edition comic when you buy Skyblazer for the SNES. The winner will receive all 8 pages specially framed and ready to hang in pride of place at home, together with a signed letter of authenticity.**

**There is also the chance to win one of five copies of Equinox for the SNES — the complete workout for your head.**

To enter, all you have to do is answer the three multiple choice questions below and complete the tie-breaker. Then send with your Skyblazer till receipt and the code number from the top right hand corner of the instruction manual as proof of purchase to:

**SKYBLAZER COMPETITION**
**P.O. BOX 2752**
**LONDON NW1 8UX**

The closing date for entries is 30th July 1994

Terms & Conditions
1. Entry into this competition implies acceptance of these terms and conditions. 2. Open to all UK residents, except employees of Sony, Manga Entertainment, Dark Horse International or any agency or associated company thereof. 3. Prizes will be awarded to the entrants who in the opinion of the judges complete the tie-breaker in the most apt and original way. 4. There are no alternate prizes. 5. The judges decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 6. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of receipt. 7. Damaged, defaced, late or illegible entries will not be accepted. 8. Closing date is 30/7/94. 9. Winners will be notified by 30/8/94. 10. For a Winners List, send an SAE to the competition address above, marked 'Skyblazer Winners List'
Promoter: Sony Electronic Publishing Ltd., Great Marlborough Street, London W1

## OFFICIAL SKYBLAZER ENTRY FORM

(1) How many special powers does Skyblazer possess?
❑ A. ... .8 ❑ B..... ...3 ❑ C.... . . 5

(2) What is the name of the evil War Lord and all round bad egg who Skyblazer must defeat?
❑ A....Micra ❑ B....SpiderMan ❑ C....Ashura

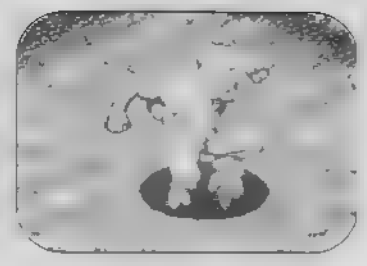
(3) What is the name of the gorgeous young clean-limbed heroine who Skyblazer is trying to rescue?
❑ A....Arianna ❑ B....Dame Edna Everage
❑ C....Ru Paul

**TIE BREAKER**

In ten words or less, finish this sentence:
*"I would like the original Skyblazer artwork because* .....
.....
.....

NAME. .....
ADDRESS .....
.....
.....
AGE.....
HAVE YOU ENCLOSED YOUR PROOF OF PURCHASE?.....

# GROUND ZERO TEXAS



● There's been a new breed of videogame emerging over the last few years; the so-called interactive movie. It started in the arcades with games like ***Mad Dog McCree*** This cobbled together real video sequences to give the player the impression of partaking in a number of wild west gun battles with a bunch of extras from a Willie Nelson video. Then just when everyone was beginning to moan that **FMV** interactive games were all looks and no gameplay, along came ***Ground Zero Texas*** Combining the shooting gallery aspects of ***Mad Dog McCree*** and ***Lethal Enforcers*** with **FMV** plot updates that you actually wanted to watch, no wonder the game has already topped the Mega CD charts

## Hurray For Hollywood

The makers of the game have made much of the fact that producing the game was very similar to shooting any other movie, with a phenomenally high body count. They certainly poached a lot of Hollywood talent to get there. The director worked on ***Rapid Fire***, ***Halloween 4*** and ***Marked For Death***, one of the screenwriters had co-written ***Robocop***; the head stunt co-ordinator also did his thang on ***Rambo 3*** and ***Star Trek 2***.

Over 300 scenes were shot for the game, totalling around 110 minutes of video footage. Stunts, exploding buildings, fist-fights — everything you expect of a good movie without having to endure cheesey subplots about love or young boys and killer whales or whatever. In fact the makers didn't get much change out of $3 million, mostly 'cos they built a scale model of an alien mothership and 'cos the whole town gets trashed at the end and then there's that huge dance number — but hey, we're giving away the plot.

## In Texas No One Can Hear You Scream

The story centres around a small town in Texas where a number of mysterious space-alien-type goings-on have been reported. A race of body-snatching aliens called the Reticulans is attempting to set up a beach-head and invade our planet. The real townspeople end up deep frozen in the Reticulan equivalent of Bejams, located somewhere just outside the town with the aliens' weapons cache. You're brought in as some sort of government trouble-shooter, you're holed up in a hotel room with no access to the outside world bar room service and a bank of closed-circuit monitors. Yes, the whole town has been wired for sound and video via a sophisticated defence system; Battlecams, armed security cameras, are set up at four key locations. You have to channel hop between the four channels, toasting anyone you think is related to ET and protecting the Texans.

The action switches between a Lethal Enforcers-style shooting gallery and Full Motion Video sequences where everyday life is played out before you. Thing is, you can't trust anyone — that silver-haired old dear who looks like Ma Walton could be a filthy slimy-skinned reptile under her cardie. Worse still sometimes the game tries to bluff you; you'll see some shifty-eyed bloke who's in fact totally innocent but who couldn't look any more like a disguised alien if he wore deely boppers and gave the vulcan salute. 'Course by the time you've discovered the truth, you've usually shot him, and then head agent Rees comes in and punches your lights out — bloody liberal.

## Dirty Pillows

From the early levels it would seem that the undercover uniform of the Imperial Reticulan storm trooper is a Wonderbra and Daisy Duke-style Hotpants — most of the baddies are well-upholstered young ladies. Later you get equipped with the techy sounding Rovercam, which is a Battlecam mounted on some sap's hat, and wander around caves looking for the aliens' arms dump. Here you'll find the aliens in their natural form; butt-naked, slimy, green, Godless and yucky. Lastly the town gets invaded by storm troopers in full battle armour. Shoot them here, and they explode in a 15-rated shower of green blood and sweetbreads. Brill! ●

# manga bytes

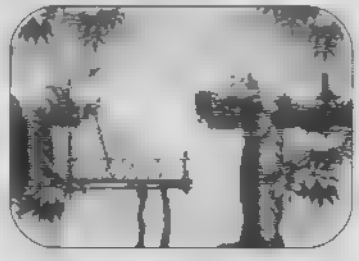
## ●Manga Mania looks at some of the latest video game releases

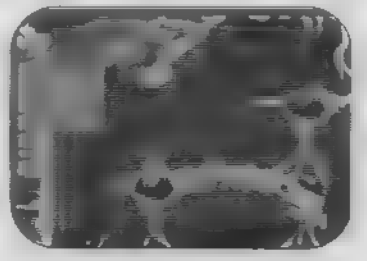
# FLASHBACK

● From the moment it first appeared, ***Flashback*** received the sort of attention usually only reserved for a UFO sighting at a Royal Wedding officiated by Take That. The game topped the charts on every format in appeared on, and recently Sony have released the **Super Nintendo** version. French gaming boffins, **Delphine**, have managed to combine the best elements of an adventure – finding and using objects, gleaning clues by logging on to computers and talking to people you meet, and lots of lateral thinking – with the more immediate thrills of the action game – loads of leaping about and ultraviolence.

## They've Got Major Too

The plot's really well thought out and cribs ideas from many of the best sci-fi flicks of the last few years. The game begins with Conrad escaping baddies and crash-landing in an alien jungle unable to remember how or why he's there. Now we've all been there, so let's not get all judgemental, suffice to say that as the game progresses the background to the story unfolds. It turns out that Conrad is some sort of agent who stumbled across a secret society of alien infiltrators who've taken key posts in the world's governments. Before he can blow the whistle and call the ***Cook Report***, he gets rumbled and ends up kidnapped and subjected to a memory-wipe on the planet Titan His adventures take him back to Earth and then on to the bizarre home world of the Aliens, battling with aliens, automatic defences and even the filth on the way.





*Left: Equinox pits you against monsters, and mystical menaces.*

*Far left: FMV action in Ground Zero Texas.*

*Below left: Flashback travels from jungle enviroments to alien planets.*

### I Can Work, I Will Work

You'll often get some wrinkly old grown-up having a go because games don't teach youngies the skills that they'll need in later life — well, it's not so with ***Flashback***. Conrad has to find gainful employment to get the money to return to Earth. He tries his hand as a bodyguard, delivery man, bounty hunter and bomb disposal expert, just the sort of stuff you find on the boards of your local Job Club, but without all the shelf stacking. There's even that staple of most sensible people's career plans: the chance to win a wad as a TV game show contestant. Except, of course, that this show makes ***Gladiators*** look about as anarchic and dangerous as ***The Food And Drink Programme***'s Christmas Quiz. ●

## EQUINOX

● Platform games — what a drag, eh? Two-dimensional and viewed from the side, they have a limited gameplay and are for the most part a bit of a snore. In the old days, when owning **Spectrum** was de rigeur amongst the wild boys of the new-born computer games industry, a lot of games used a persective called '**3D isometric**'. The game is viewed as if from the top corner of a room, allowing programmers to easily give the impression of 3D without lots of clever programming tricks. Or something like that anyway. It's probably something to do with angles. Anyway, the point is it's really easy to create the impression of 3D objects using simple building blocks, and just as easy to move the blocks about and stack them up on screen. Hence games can be created using clever 3D puzzles that stretch your spatial awareness skills to the limit.

### Ultra Vixen

***Equinox*** updates those 3D glory days for the **Super Nintendo**. The role-playing adventure game came out in Japan last year and has only just come out here. You play Glendaal, a warrior and a wizard despite being a bit of a hopeless shortie. Embarking on a quest to save his dear old dad from the evil ultra-vixen Sonia, ahead of him lie eight different dungeons comprising of a total of 450 separate rooms. Each of these is a chamber of horrors packed with lethal traps, vicious villains, and those fiendishly difficult 3D puzzles featuring blocks, conveyor belts and nasty spiky bits.

### Nipples

Each of the eight dungeon complexes has a totally different style: from the shipboard shenanigans and shivering timbers aboard the Galleon, to the permanently nippy Ice Palace where brass monkeys fear to tread and bare-chested Glendaal ends up with nipples you could take an eye out on. There are goodies galore to be found by poking about: potions, yummy tuck and loads of different keys. There's also magic scrolls, and lots of smart weapons which let you show off your Beni Hana skills of bladesmanship. Equinox has drawn comparisons with the Anime-style adventure and benchmark RPG Zelda and has already been hailed as the biggest game of the year — thank the good lord it's got a battery-backed RAM, otherwise you could spend the better part of your adolescence playing it. ●

## SKYBLAZER

● Take a look at the fantasy adventure ***Skyblazer***, the graphics and animation, the characters and plot, and you can't help but notice all the heavy Manga influences — no surprise, considering the game's Japanese origins. The story pits the young warrior **Skyblazer** against Ashura, the evil Lord Of War, in an effort to rescue arch-babe Arianna. It's all very heavy on the mysticism and Eastern promise, so suffice to say you play Skyblazer and there are armies of beasties out there to punch your face through the back of your head.

### Gameplay Horn O' Plenty

As well as loads of different variations on the platformy and beat 'em up themes, the game has drawn on all the best bits from a number of the classic games. Remember that game ***Space Harrier***? It was huge in the arcades and featured a natty 3D flying perspective; well, **Skyblazer**'s got a sub level just like it. Then there's a couple of levels which borrow from the innovative platformer ***Nebulus***; **Skyblazer** has to ascend a cylindrical tower by hopping from platforms located at various points on its outside. To make things harder, some platforms appear periodically, some move about, and some contain hidden foot-long spikes which wreak havoc with **Skyblazer**'s bunions.

### Sounds Like A Winner

Not only does ***Skyblazer*** boast some stunning graphics, it's also got some of the best sound ever in a **SNES** game, and atmospheric ditties tha mix Japanese restaurant music with thrash metal. There's a constant stream of noise as **Skyblazer** duffs up his foes; brilliant samples from Fists Of Fury-type chop-sockey flicks, and satisfyingly guttural Monica Seles-type grunts as he hands out knuckle sandwiches. Smart, eh?

### Sunny Spells

And yes, Skyblazer's got all those magic powers seen in the comic, including ...

**Power Flash**: This is useful for ramming enemies or zipping across a room from wall to wall without touching the floor — handy if the floor is covered with boiling lava or if the carpets have just been shampooed.

**Stop Time**: Freezes all enemies allowing Skyblazer to wander about at his leisure duffing them up, going through their wallets, and stripping them naked and posing alongside them for photos.

**Warrior Force**: Makes Skyblazer invincible and turns him a lovely golden colour that makes him look like the Lurpak Butter Man in his Sunday best. ●

## IT'S BIG!

Appleseed is © 1993 Masamune Shirow and Seishinsha

128 EXPLOSIVE PAGES

## IT'S BAD!

Akira is © 1993 MASH•ROOM Co. Ltd

HI-OCTANE ACTION FROM APPLESEED, DIRTY PAIR & AKIRA!

## IT'S BEAUTIFUL!

The Dirty Pair is © 1994 Haruka Takachiho

JAPANESE COMIC STRIP ARTWORK TO DIE FOR!

## IT'S ...

# MANGA mania

PLUS ANIME, MANGA & GAMING NEWS, REVIEWS ,INTERVIEWS AND COMPETITIONS TOO!

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# ARE YOU AN INTELLECTUAL MIDGET?
# BOFFINS *KICK* SAND IN YOUR FACE!

## You Need

# EQUINOX

# the complete workout for your head

With it's blend of 100% totally non-linear gameplay and mind-expanding 3D graphics, Equinox is guaranteed to make you a complete egg-headed brainiac. Even if you can't think your way out of a soggy paper bag, a few forays into the

dizzying labyrinth of *450 dungeons*, packed with fiendish traps, cortex fryin' puzzles and lethal enemies, will soon transform you into a walking cerebellum, irresistible to the opposite sex. Honest!

SONY IMAGESOFT

**SNES**

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# The Japanese Art of the Knuckle Sandwich

Lovingly created by the Manga-mental games gurus of the Orient, this epic arcade adventure is now available in the UK. Master super-cool martial arts and devastating magic powers, battle across mystic lands, explore undersea worlds and blaze across the skies - with 21 complex and incredibly varied levels, Skyblazer makes other games look positively Bonsai.

# SKYBLAZER™

SNES

SONY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

ANIME IN THE U.K.

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